

Washington, DC - Congressman Mark Kirk (R-Highland Park) voted Wednesday to block the FBI and the Justice Department from using the Patriot Act to search library and book store records. Lawmakers voted 238-187 to block the part of the Patriot Act that allows the government to investigate the reading habits of terror suspects. Thirty-eight Republicans voted for the amendment offered by Rep. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) that prohibits the Department of Justice from using any funds to conduct record searches in bookstores or libraries.

“Arresting librarians for not turning over records is not what our anti-terrorism laws should be encouraging,” said Kirk. “It is important to maintain our civil liberties as we strive to make our country safer. The Sanders amendment helps accomplish this goal.”

The vote reversed a narrow loss last year by lawmakers concerned about threats to privacy rights. The amendment still allows the government to seek out records of internet use at libraries. A vote on extending the Patriot Act is expected Thursday in the House of Representatives.

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